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ORIGINAL
FILED

MAY - 8 2007

RICHARD W. WIEKING
CLERK, U.S. DISTRICT COURT
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

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E-filing

BZ

11 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

12 FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

C 07 2478

13 JOHN DOE A/K/A BRIAN SAPIENT,) Civil Action No. _____
14 Plaintiff,) COMPLAINT
15 v.) (Jury Trial Demanded)
16 URI GELLER A/K/A URI GELLER FREUD)
17 and)
18 EXPLOROLOGIST LTD.,)
19 Defendants.)
20 _____

21 1. This is a civil action seeking injunctive relief and damages for misrepresentation of
22 copyright claims under the Digital Millennium Copyright Act ("DMCA"), as well as declaratory
23 relief.

24 2. This case arises out of a baseless legal threat of copyright infringement made by the
25 Defendants against Plaintiff. The threat resulted in the removal of a video Plaintiff posted to the
26 popular Internet media website YouTube, as well as the suspension of Plaintiff's YouTube
27 account.

28

PARTIES

3. Plaintiff John Doe a/k/a Brian Sapient ("Sapient") is an individual residing in Pennsylvania. Due to Sapient's controversial religious beliefs, which he discusses widely on Internet websites including www.myspace.com/briansapient and www.rationalresponders.com, he receives a substantial amount of abusive correspondence, including threats of physical harm against him. As a result, he uses the online pseudonym "Brian Sapient" to help ensure his safety, and seeks to proceed under that name in this case.

4. Upon information and belief, defendant Uri Geller a/k/a Uri Geller Freud (“Geller”) is an individual residing in Sonning-on-Thames, Berkshire, England.

5. Upon information and belief, Defendant Explorologist Ltd. is a private limited company with its registered office located in London, England.

6. Upon information and belief, Geller is a director and controlling shareholder of Explorologist Ltd.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

7. This Court has subject matter jurisdiction over this claim pursuant to the Copyright Act (17 U.S.C. §§ 101 et seq.), 28 U.S.C. §§ 1331 and 1338, and the Declaratory Judgment Act (28 U.S.C. § 2291).

8. Sapient is informed, believes and thereon alleges that Defendants have sufficient contacts with this district generally and, in particular, with the events herein alleged, that he is subject to the exercise of jurisdiction of this Court.

VENUE AND INTRADISTRICT ASSIGNMENT

9. Venue is proper in this district under 28 U.S.C. § 1391.

10. Assignment to the San Francisco division is proper pursuant to Local Rule 3-2(c) and (d) because a substantial portion of the events giving rise to this action occurred in this district and division.

FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS

11. On or about October 19, 1993, the Public Broadcasting Service ("PBS") first aired "Secrets of the Psychics," an episode of the popular television series NOVA.

1 12. Sapient is a member of the Rational Response Squad, which describes itself as "an
2 activist network that seeks to help the world overcome irrationality." The Rational Response
3 Squad's activities include, *inter alia*, posting videos debunking what it maintains are irrational
4 beliefs and theories on a popular website on the Internet known as "YouTube," located at
5 <http://www.youtube.com>. YouTube is a video-sharing website where millions of Internet users
6 post videos and make them available to others for viewing. These videos range from traditional
7 home videos of personal events, to news reports, to advertisements and television programs.
8 Sapient and the Rational Response Squad rely on YouTube to reach thousands of audience
9 members and promote their activist messages and campaigns online.

10 13. On November 15, 2006, Sapient uploaded a portion of the NOVA program "Secrets
11 of the Psychics" (hereafter "NOVA Video") from his computer to YouTube. The video was
12 available at the Internet address <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M9w7jHYriFo>>.

13 14. The NOVA Video depicted, *inter alia*, the magician James Randi challenging the
14 performance techniques of Geller, a well-known performer who claims to have psychic abilities.
15 The video included clips from various Geller performances, such as one from the "The Tonight
16 Show With Johnny Carson" in which Geller was unable to demonstrate his supernatural powers in
17 front of a live studio audience. Upon information and belief, only three seconds of the content of
18 the NOVA Video is subject to a copyright owned by Geller or Explorologist Ltd. Those three
19 seconds show Dr. C. J. Hughes describing the alleged accomplishments of Geller at a public event.
20 The validity of those accomplishments is then the subject of the rest of the video and the subject
21 which Randi subsequently challenges.

22 15. On information and belief, on March 23, 2007, an agent of Explorologist Ltd. and
23 Geller demanded that YouTube take down the NOVA Video pursuant to the DMCA, 17 U.S.C. §
24 512. By authorizing the demand, Geller and Explorolgist Ltd. attested under penalty of perjury that
25 they owned or were authorized to act on behalf of the owner of an exclusive copyright that had
26 been infringed by the video, and that the notice of infringement they sent was accurate. See Exhibit
27 A & B.

28 16. On March 23, 2007, YouTube sent Sapient an email informing him that it had

removed his video in response to a third-party claim of copyright infringement from Explorologist Ltd. A true and correct copy of this email is attached hereto as Exhibit C.

17. As a result of Defendants' copyright infringement notice, Sapient's YouTube account was suspended. Sapient quickly responded by submitting a counter-notification of non-infringement to YouTube under the DMCA on March 27, 2007. However, as a result of Defendant's conduct, Sapient's account and all of his videos (including, but not limited to, the NOVA Video) remained unavailable for more than two weeks.

COUNT I: 17 U.S.C. 512(f) MISREPRESENTATION

18. Sapient repeats and incorporates herein by reference the allegations in the preceding paragraphs.

19. Upon information and belief, the NOVA Video does not infringe any copyright owned by Defendants.

20. Upon information and belief, Defendants knew or should have known if they acted with reasonable care or diligence that the NOVA Video did not infringe any of their copyrights on the date they sent their DMCA complaint to YouTube. Upon information and belief, Defendants did not act with reasonable care or diligence before sending their DMCA complaint to YouTube.

21. Defendants would have had no substantial doubt, had they been acting in good faith, that the NOVA Video did not infringe any of their copyrights on the date they sent their DMCA complaint to YouTube. Upon information and belief, Defendants were not acting in good faith while sending their DMCA complaint to YouTube.

22. Accordingly, Defendants violated 17 U.S.C. § 512(f) by knowingly materially misrepresenting under DMCA § 512 that the NOVA Video infringed their copyright.

23. As a direct and proximate result of Defendants' actions, Sapient has suffered substantial and irreparable injury. Such injury includes, but is not limited to, the financial and personal expenses associated with responding to Defendants' complaint to YouTube and harm to Sapient's free speech rights under the First Amendment.

COUNT II: DECLARATORY RELIEF OF NON-INFRINGEMENT

24. Sapient repeats and incorporates herein by reference the allegations in the preceding

1 paragraphs.

2 25. There is a real and actual controversy between Sapient and Defendants regarding
3 whether the NOVA Video constitutes infringement of a copyright lawfully owned by Defendants.

4 26. Sapient contends that, consistent with the Copyright Act of the United States of
5 America, including those laws prohibiting direct, contributory or vicarious infringement, laws
6 protecting fair use and the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, and judicial
7 decisions construing such laws, doctrines, and provisions, publication of the NOVA video was and
8 is lawful.

9 27. Wherefore, Sapient requests that the Court determine and adjudge that each and
10 every one of the above-stated propositions states the law applicable to the facts involved in this
11 action.

12 **PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

13 WHEREFORE, the Plaintiff prays for judgment as follows:

- 14 A. A declaratory judgment that the NOVA Video posted by Plaintiff does not infringe
15 any copyright owned by Defendants;
- 16 B. Injunctive relief restraining Defendants, their agents, servants, employees,
17 successors and assigns, and all others in concert and privity with them, from
18 bringing any lawsuit or threat against Plaintiff for copyright infringement in
19 connection with the NOVA Video, including but not limited to its publication,
20 distribution, performance, display, licensing, or the ability to host it online or link to
21 it from any website;
- 22 C. Damages according to proof;
- 23 D. Attorneys fees pursuant to 17 U.S.C. § 512(f), other portions of the Copyright Act
24 including Section 505, on a Private Attorney General basis, or otherwise as allowed
25 by law;
- 26 E. Plaintiff's costs and disbursements; and
- 27 F. Such other and further relief as the Court shall find just and proper.

28 Plaintiff hereby requests a jury trial for all issues triable by jury including, but not limited to, those

1 issues and claims set forth in any amended complaint or consolidated action.
2
3

4 DATED: May 8, 2007
5

6 By 
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12 Attorneys for Plaintiff
13 JOHN DOE A/K/A BRIAN SAPIENT
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Notice of Claimed Copyright Infringement

YouTube, Inc.
Attn: YouTube CMT Program
1000 Cherry Ave. Second Floor
San Bruno, CA 94066
Fax: 650.872.8513

Date 28/12/06

Dear YouTube:

I, the undersigned, state UNDER PENALTY OF PERJURY that:

- I am the owner, or an agent authorized to act on behalf of the owner of an exclusive right that is allegedly infringed;
- I have a good faith belief that use of the material in the manner complained of is not authorized by the copyright owner, its agent, or the law; and
- This notification is accurate.

My contact information is below (* = required information)

Name of IP Owner* URI GELLER
Name and Title* URI GELLER
Company Explorologist LTD
Address* Sonning Court Sonning Berks RG4 6UR UK
City, State and ZIP* Sonning
Email Address (to correspond with YouTube) URI@URIGELLER.COM
Telephone* +44 1189 696766
Fax +44 1189 699439

In addition to the undersigned, the following persons have the proper authority to sign future Notices of Claimed Infringement on behalf of the IP Owner:

Name <u>Shimshon (Shipi) SHTRANG</u>	Email <u>Shipi@URIGELLER.COM</u>
Name _____	Email _____
Name _____	Email _____

Truthfully,

Uri Geller

Authorized Signature

Uri Geller

Print Name

EXHIBIT B

----- Original Message -----

Subject: Content Verification Program - Videos flagged by orolp1x1e
Date: Fri, 23 Mar 2007 10:29:30 -0700 (PDT)
From: YouTube Service <service@youtube.com>, orolp1x1e <url@urlgeller.com>
To: url@urlgeller.com, Copyright Bulk <copyright@youtube.com>

YouTube | Broadcast Yourself™

The following videos have been flagged as infringing by orolp1x1e (the content owner) and need to be reviewed for deletion:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M9w7jHYriFo&search=uri%20geller>
<<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M9w7jHYriFo&search=uri%20geller>>
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K_MkxI6ubaA&search=uri%20geller
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K_MkxI6ubaA&search=uri%20geller>
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WmG4G6sdGoQ&search=uri%20geller>
<<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WmG4G6sdGoQ&search=uri%20geller>>
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eg2oY-OWcy4&search=uri%20geller>
<<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eg2oY-OWcy4&search=uri%20geller>>
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jBQD2uunYYY&search=uri%20geller>
<<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jBQD2uunYYY&search=uri%20geller>>

If you are the content owner, you are receiving this email as verification that we have received your deletion requests.

Copyright © 2007 YouTube, Inc.

EXHIBIT C

----- Original Message -----

From: [DMCA Notice](#)
To: [RationalResponse](#)
Sent: Friday, March 23, 2007 2:46 PM
Subject: Video Removed: Copyright Infringement

YouTube | Broadcast Yourself™

Dear Member:

This is to notify you that we have removed or disabled access to the following material as a result of a third-party notification by Explorologist LTD claiming that this material is infringing:

James Randi exposes Uri Geller and Peter Popoff: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M9w7jHYriFo>

Please Note: Repeat incidents of copyright infringement will result in the deletion of your account and all videos uploaded to that account. In order to avoid future strikes against your account, please delete any videos to which you do not own the rights, and refrain from uploading additional videos that infringe on the copyrights of others. For more information about YouTube's copyright policy, please read the [Copyright Tips guide](#).

If you elect to send us a counter notice, please go to our [Help Center](#) to access the instructions.

Please note that under Section 512(f) of the Copyright Act, any person who knowingly materially misrepresents that material or activity was removed or disabled by mistake or misidentification may be subject to liability.

Sincerely,
YouTube, Inc.

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